

A REVISION OF THE PYTHON GENERA *ASPIDITES* AND *PYTHON* (SERPENTES: BOIDAE) IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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ABSTRACT

The five species and subspecies representing *Aspidites* and *Python* in Western Australia, namely *A. melanocephalus* (Krefft), *A. ramsayi* (Macleay), *P. spilotos variegatus* (Gray), *P. spilotos imbricatus* subsp. nov. and *P. carinatus* sp. nov. are described and their distribution is mapped.

It is demonstrated that populations of two taxa in south-western Western Australia (*A. ramsayi* and *P. spilotos imbricatus*) have been greatly reduced in the last few decades.

INTRODUCTION

Pythons are large, conspicuous and easily captured. Consequently most of the Australian species were described before the end of last century and generally they number among our best known reptiles. However, the problems of preserving and storing large specimens, such as pythons, has delayed the accumulation of long series in collections and thus an understanding of intraspecific variation and the detection of obscure species and subspecies.

Although a good deal has been published on Australian pythons much of it is of a popular and uncritical nature. Simple facts such as accurate measurements of the various species have until recently been difficult to obtain.

Worrell (1951) attempted to summarize what was known about Australian pythons by combining his field observations with data from specimens in the Australian Museum. Otherwise no one has worked their way systematically through large collections of Australian pythons.

When I began revising the pythons of Western Australia it was my intention to publish all results in one paper. However, it became clear that even in Western Australia '*Liasis childreni*' comprised two (and possibly three) species and that resolution of the *Liasis childreni* complex would be best accomplished by an Australia-wide revision.

This is the first of two papers dealing with species in which study was restricted to Western Australian taxa and populations. The second will deal with the *Liasis olivaceus* species-group.

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This paper is based on 110 specimens in the Western Australian Museum herpetological collection (R series): *Aspidites melanocephalus* (25), *A. ramsayi* (33), *Python spilotus imbricatus* (47), *P. spilotus variegatus* (4) and *P. carinatus* (1).

Width of head was measured at its widest point; length of head from snout to posterior end of the lower jaw.

To minimize error midbody scale rows were counted at the dorsal row opposite the middle ventral. Scale rows at neck were counted two head lengths back from the snout. Scale rows at tail were counted one head length forward of the vent. With bilateral characters such as labials which can vary even in an individual, both counts were recorded for each specimen.

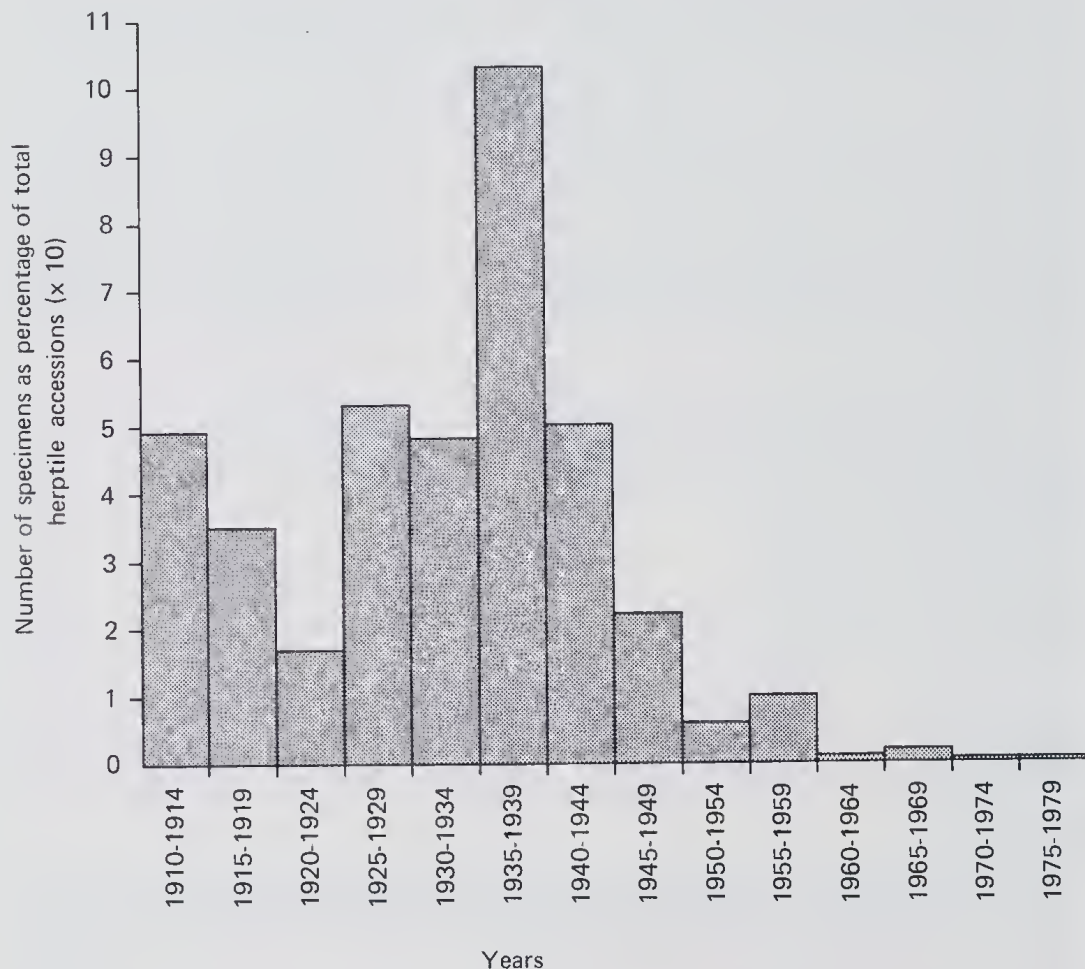


Fig. 1: Western Australian Museum accessions of *Aspidites ramsayi* from south-western Western Australia.

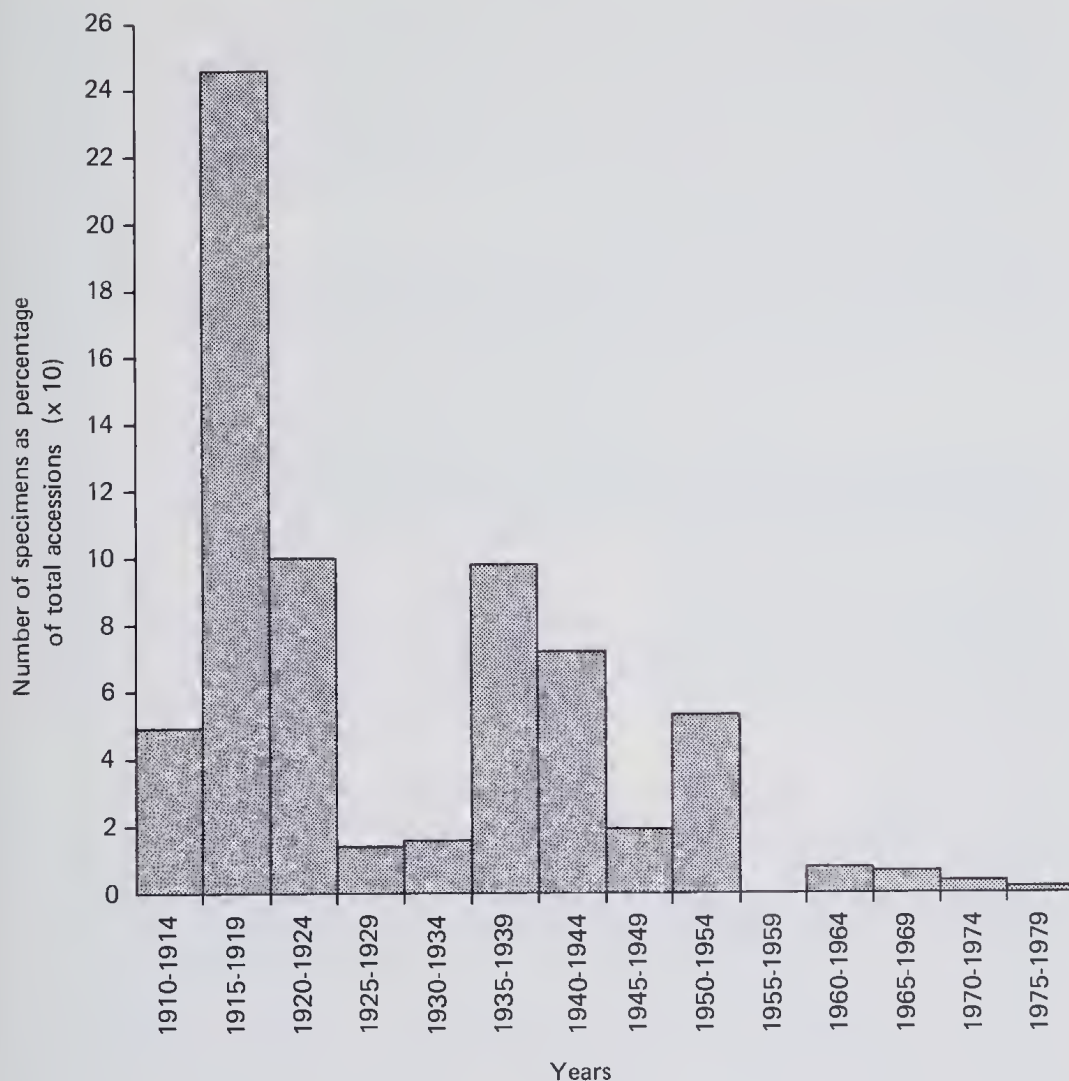


Fig. 2: Western Australian Museum accessions of *Python spilotos imbricatus*.

SYSTEMATICS

Genus *Aspidites* Peters, 1876

Aspidiotes Krefft, 1864.(non Bouché, 1834), *Proc. zool. Soc. London* 1864: 20. Type-species (by monotypy) *Aspidiotes melanocephalus* Krefft.

Aspidites Peters, 1876. *M. Ber. K. preuss. Akad. Wiss. Berlin* 1876: 914. Type-species (by monotypy) *Aspidiotes melanocephalus* Krefft.

Diagnosis

Premaxillary teeth absent. Majority of subcaudals single. Also distinguished from *Liasis* and *Python* by absence of sensory pits on labials and rostral.

Description

Head shields symmetrical. Nasal entire. Parietals fragmented but discernible, usually two symmetrical lobate fragments, sometimes in contact but usually separated by small scales.

Ventrals 273-359. Subcaudals 43-69. Anal scale entire. Midbody scale rows 43-63. Dorsal scales smooth, moderately imbricate, apically rounded.

Juveniles strongly banded and compressed.

Aspidites melanocephalus (Krefft, 1864)

Aspidiotes melanocephalus Krefft, 1864. *Proc. zool. Soc. London* 1864: 20. Type locality: Port Denison, Queensland.

Aspidites melanocephalus Peters, 1876. *M. Ber. K. preuss. Akad. Wiss. Berlin* 1876:533, 914.

Diagnosis

Distinguished from *A. ramsayi* by its glossy black or deep reddish-brown hood.

Description

Largest specimen 3023 mm (Smith and Johnstone 1981). Head 1.5-2.1 times as long as wide (N 17, mean 1.6). Neck distinct from head, but not prominently so.

Rostral 1.5-2.0 times as wide as high. Two pairs of prefrontals, anterior pair always and posterior pair almost always in contact. One loreal (N 38). Preoculars 2 (N 38). Postoculars 3 (11% of specimens) or 4 (89% of specimens) (N 36, mean 3.9). Anterior temporals 3 (18% of specimens), 4 (65% of specimens), 5 (11% of specimens) or 6 (6% of specimens) (N 36, mean 4.1). Upper labials 10 (47% of specimens), 11 (47% of specimens) or 12 (6% of specimens) (N 36, mean 10.5), usually fifth and sixth entering orbit, sometimes the sixth (once sixth and seventh). Lower labials 14 (12% of specimens), 15 (18% of specimens), 16 (35% of specimens), 17 (26% of specimens) or 18 (9% of specimens) (N 34, mean 16.1).

Ventrals 315-359 (N 18, mean 330.4). Subcaudals 63-69 (N 18, mean 66.1), mostly entire. Ventrals plus subcaudals 380-427 (N 16, mean 395.9). Scale rows at midbody 50-60 (N 14, mean 53.2), at neck 37-46 (N 13, mean 47.1, decreasing by 6-17), at tail 35-37 (N 8, mean 36.1, decreasing by 15-20).

Coloration of adult. Head with glossy black or deep reddish-brown hood, extending 16-26 scales beyond the parietals. Back light brown to reddish-brown with many irregular dark brown to black bands 2-4 scales wide on

flanks, usually increasing in width on back, often to extent of coalescing along vertebral line and sometimes extending on to creamish ventrals and subcaudals as vague blotches and smudges. Bands discernible at all ages. In juveniles contrast between ground colour and bands is more pronounced and the black or dark reddish-brown of the head extends back on to the anterior ventrals.

Distribution

In Western Australia the Kimberley Division south to Lake Argyle, St George Ranges and Broome. Also western part of Great Sandy Desert (Anketell Ridge) and North-West Division (from Port Hedland south to Yardie Creek and east to Warrawagine and Jiggalong) (Fig. 3).

Material Examined

Kimberley Division: Kalumburu (42795); Wyndham (51208); 8 km S of Wyndham (17115-17); 7 km NE Thompson Spring (44785); 8 km N of Lake Argyle Village (60610); Lake Argyle (44786, 59946-48, 60109); 4 km S of Beverley Springs HS (64978); Mt Hart HS (24065); Derby (14940); Broome (58841); Broome (31210); St George Ranges (51292).

Eastern Division: Anketell Ridge road in 20°13'S, 121°24'E (64694).

North-West Division: Port Hedland (12268); Warrawagine (14599); Pannawonica (49888); Tom Price (46170); presumably Learmonth (36566); Yardie Creek (22622).

Northern Territory: Katherine (13732); Kildurk (40008); Tennant Creek (21499); 32 km S of Tennant Creek (21498).

Aspidites ramsayi (Macleay, 1882)

Aspidiotes ramsayi Macleay, 1881. *Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W.* 6: 813. Type locality: Fort Burke, New South Wales.

Aspidites collaris Longman, 1913. *Mem. Qd Mus.* 2: 40. Type locality: Avondale Station near Cunnamulla.

Diagnosis

Distinguished from *A. melanocephalus* by absence of dark hood.

Description

Largest specimen 2260 mm. Head 1.2-2.0 times as long as wide (N 23, mean 1.5). Neck distinct from head but not prominently so.

Rostral 1.0-2.0 (mostly 1.5) times as wide as high. Two pairs of prefrontals; anterior pair always, posterior pair almost always in contact. Two (rarely 3) loreals. Preoculars 1 (4% of specimens), 2 (91% of specimens) or 3 (5% of specimens) (N 56, mean 2.0). Postoculars 3 (4% of specimens), 4 (48% of specimens), 5 (39% of specimens) or 6 (9% of specimens) (N 56, mean 4.5). Anterior temporals 4 (4% of specimens), 5 (44% of specimens), 6 (33% of specimens), 7 (15% of specimens), 8 (2% of specimens) or 9 (2% of specimens) (N 46, mean 5.7). Upper labials 11 (9% of specimens), 12

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- *Aspidites ramsayi* (specimens examined)
- *Aspidites melanocephalus* (specimens examined)
- ◐ both species
- ▲ *Aspidites ramsayi* (other records)
- *Aspidites melanocephalus* (other records)

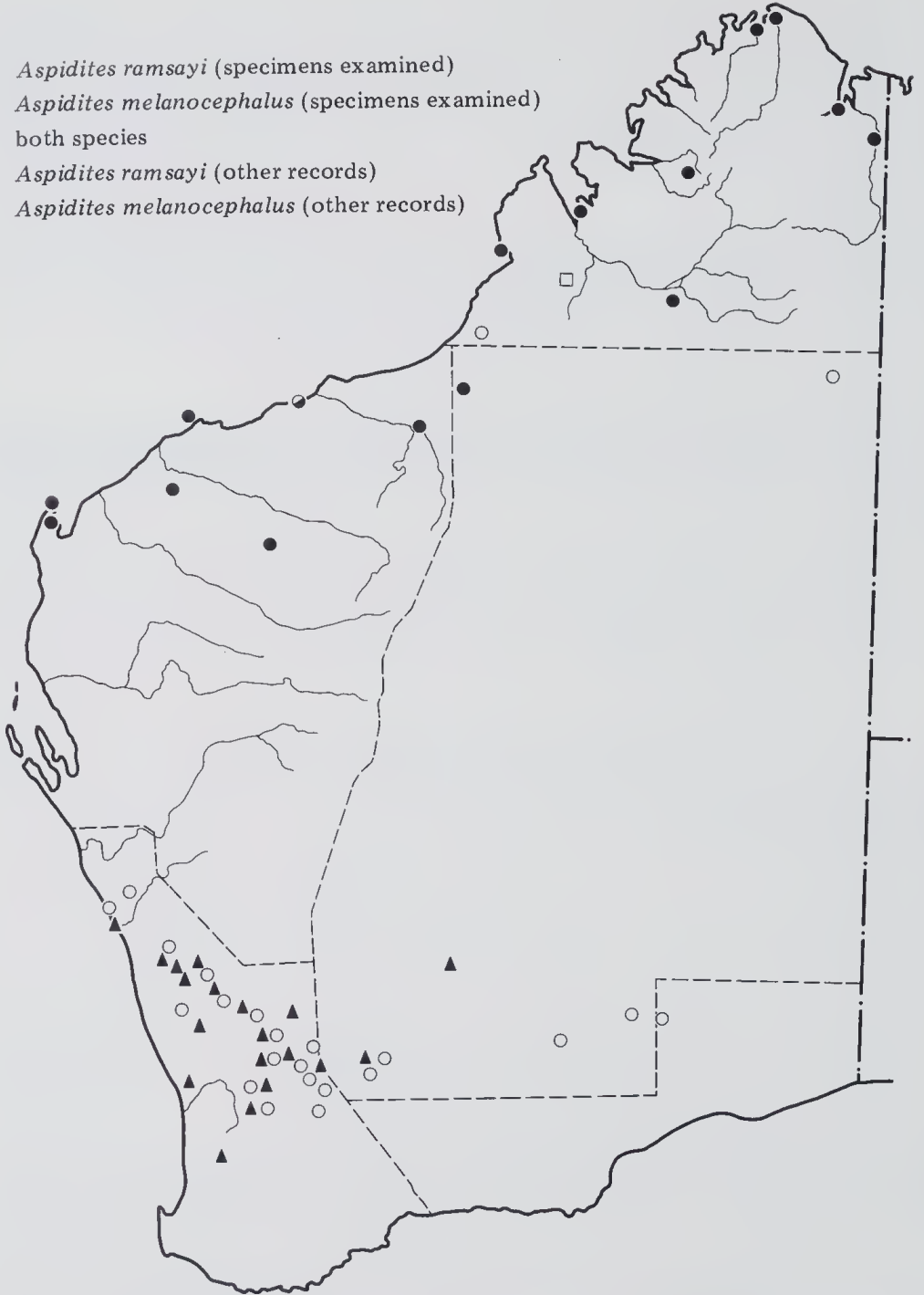


Fig. 3: Location of specimens examined and catalogue records of *Aspidites*.

(46% of specimens), 13 (32% of specimens) or 14 (13% of specimens) (N 54, mean 12.5), usually sixth and seventh entering orbit. Lower labials 14 (2% of specimens) (N 54, mean 16.6).

Ventrals 273-304 (N 27, mean 286.4). Subcaudals 43-53 (N 28, mean 47.5), mostly entire. Ventrals plus subcaudals 317-346 (N 26, mean 332.4). Scale rows at midbody 43-63 (N 26, mean 53.2), at neck 32-42 (N 21, mean 43.5, decreasing by 3-16), before vent 33-51 (N 19, mean 37.8, decreasing by 6-21).

Coloration of adult. Head, body and tail uniform brown except for vague darker bands along vertebral column (remnants of juvenile bands). Ventrals yellow with irregular pinkish-brown markings.

Coloration of juveniles. Supraoculars and tip of snout dark brownish-black. Back and top of tail pale brown with many dark brown bands of regular width (4-6 scales), nearly always coalescing along vertebral line, always wider than interspaces. Scales at edge of bands solid brown, inner scales of bands only edged darker brown. Ventrals (but not throat) brown.

Distribution

The specimens examined are from three areas: (1) the fringe of the Great Sandy Desert from near Balgo west and south to Mt Phire and Port Hedland; (2) the Nullarbor Plain and its vicinity (Zanthus east to near Rawlinna); and (3) the south-west from Yuna south to Boddington and east to Karalee and near Menzies (Fig. 3).

The first population is almost certainly continuous with the central Australian population which in turn is presumably continuous with the Nullarbor and near Nullarbor population. If the sight record 19 km S of Menzies is taken as bridging the gap between the Karalee and Zanthus specimens a case for there being a single, more or less continuous population in Western Australia could be made.

However, the sandplains with which this species appear to be associated in the south-west are discontinuous with the arid sandy deserts of the interior. To the north and east they are separated by heavy soils dominated by *Acacia*, particularly mulga. Until there are specimens from these intervening areas with heavy soils to prove the contrary the south-west population is best considered as being separated from the inland population.

Remarks

Pythons, like other large animals, have always posed problems of preservation and storage for museums. In the first half of this century a number of pythons presented to the Western Australian Museum were identified, catalogued, sometimes measured, then discarded.

Two species of python in the south-west of Western Australia (*A. ramsayi* and *P. spilotos*) are easily identified and catalogue records of discarded

specimens are considered reliable. Registered numbers of these records are listed under Material Examined in square brackets.

An analysis of all records of *A. ramsayi* records in south-west Western Australia indicates a marked reduction in accessions over the last 40 years, indicating declining numbers of the species in that region (see Fig. 1). About 80% of the Western Australian Museum's accessions of *A. ramsayi* are between 1925 and 1944. There have only been two (3% of total *A. ramsayi* accessions for the area) in the last 10 years. There seems little doubt that the south-western population is close to extinction.

Material Examined

Kimberley Division: Mt Phire (28043).

North-West Division: Port Hedland (34070).

South-West Division: Yuna (5830); between Geraldton and Northampton (5237); Eradu (24849); Newmarracarra (5808); 21 km E of Yandanooka (29578); Arrino [5902]; Caron [5916]; Latham (5804), [8304]; Winchester [9740]; Coorow [8515]; Buntine [9548]; Wubin [7772]; Dalwallinu (1149); 8 km N of Badgingarra (26465); 26 km E of Watheroo (11557); Kalannie [5083]; Pithara [6506]; Kulja (4740); Wialki [8018]; Damboring [6902, 7304]; Walebing [10700]; Gabbin (3318, 5179, 8079); Cowcowing [7517]; Champion (2254); Trayning [4346]; Yelbini (7203); Korrelocking (708); Nukarni (1621, 5831); Boralanning via Noonijin (5979); Burrakoppin (43459); Merredin (17662), [5153]; Norpa (7118); Meckering [213]; Cunderdin (4310), Muntagin (20599); Balkuling [5127, 5131]; near Quairading (2499); Dulbellling [5092]; Narembeen (52102), [7209]; Boddington [8263].

Eastern Division: 40 km N of Balgo Mission (63270); 64 km NNW of Naretha (21969); Zanthus (31152); Karalee (2000); Yellowdine (5072), [5714]; Ghooli [5713], Marvel Loch (4602).

Eucla Division: 48 km NW of Rawlinna (34100).

Other records: Loveridge (1934: 271) lists two Western Australian specimens: MCZ32806 (near Burracoppin) and MCZ32807 (?Merredin). Recorded in the Toodyay district until 1950 by members of Toodyay Naturalists' Club (Storr and Chapman 1979). One seen dead on road 19 km S of Menzies on 11 February 1966 in mixed acacia-mallee scrub, including some mulga (Storr and Smith MS diary).

Genus *Python* Daudin, 1803

See McDowell 1975: 49 for diagnostic characters and synonymy.

Remarks

Until 1977 two species of *Python* were known from Australia, *P. amethystinus* (see McDowell *supra cit.* pp. 31 and 59) from north-eastern Queensland and *P. spilotos* which comprised two subspecies: *P. spilotos spilotos*, which occurs east of the Great Dividing Range from Byron Bay in the north almost to the Victorian border in the south (Gow 1976), and *P. spilotos variegatus*, found across Australia generally west of the Great Dividing Range.

Gow (1977a) described *P. oenpelliensis* from western Arnhem Land, a species apparently restricted to that region.

- *Python spilotus imbricatus* examined
- △ *Python spilotus imbricatus* (other records)
- *Python spilotus variegatus* examined
- ⊗ *Python spilotus variegatus* (other records)
- ▲ *Python s. variegatus* and *Python carinatus*

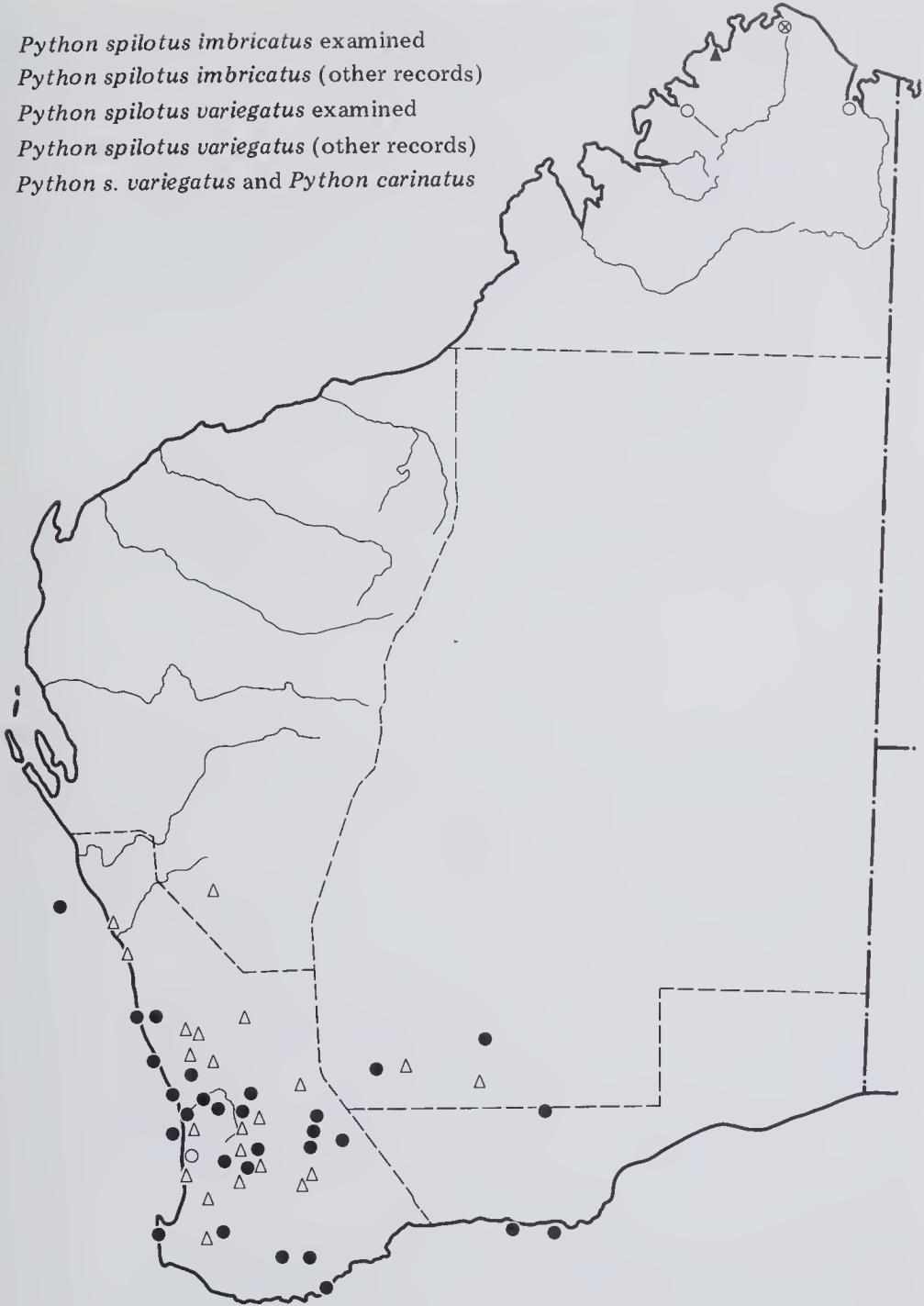


Fig. 4: Location of specimens examined and catalogue records of *Python*.

Similarly, *P. carinatus* (described below) has only been found at one locality on one of the sandstone plateaux of north-west Kimberley and is probably confined to them. It is yet another example illustrating the high degree of endemism in north-west Kimberley reptiles (see Smith and Johnstone 1981).

The distribution of *P. spilotes variegatus* is not as widespread as indicated in general texts. In Western Australia the distinctive south-western population (described below) is completely isolated from *P. spilotes variegatus*. Examination of other *P. spilotes* west of the Great Dividing Range may indicate a similar disjunct distribution. For example, the distinctive reddish central Australian population is probably isolated.

Python carinatus sp. nov.

Figs 5 and 6

Holotype

R45352 in Western Australian Museum; collected at Mitchell River Falls, Western Australia (14°50'S, 125°42'E) on 14 January 1973 by L.A. Smith, R.E. Johnstone and J.A. Smith.

Diagnosis

Distinguished from other species of *Python* by having keeled dorsal scales (Fig. 5).

Description of Holotype (the only available specimen)

Total length 1975 mm (SVL 1760, tail 215). Tail 12.2% of SVL; not prehensile. Cloacal spurs present.

Rostral with angular apex, and a pair of oblique sensory pits; almost as wide as high, penetrating deeply between the internasals which are separated by 2 small median scales. Anterior prefrontals broken into 4 symmetric parts, anterior pair of fragments in contact, posterior pair separated by a scale. Frontal oval (9 x 8 mm). Four supraoculars (third largest) separated from frontal by a row of small scales. Remainder of head shields asymmetrically divided. Loreals small, numerous, sharply differentiated from other scales. Upper labials 14 and 15, seventh and eighth entering orbit (both sides), first 3 on each side with an oblique pit. Lower labials 16 and 17 with pits in labials 9-14, and 10-14. Mental groove deep, bordered on each side by first lower labial and about 15 scales, all much smaller than adjacent gular scales.

Ventrals 298. Anal scale entire. Subcaudals 83, all but numbers 4-6 and 73-80 divided. Scale rows at midbody 45; at neck 41 and at tail 30.

Dorsals imbricate, scales in first and last 4 or 5 rows smooth, remainder with a short, blunt keel (keels strongest on mid-dorsal scales).



Fig. 5: Holotype of *Python carinatus*.



Fig. 6: Head of holotype of *Python carinatus*.

Head brownish, unpatterned except for 2 vague whitish streaks on the temporals. Ground colour of dorsum brownish-white with dark brown variegation and blotches. Ground colour becoming paler and blotches darker posteriorly, thus increasing contrast in pattern. Ventrals mostly off-white, every second to fifth smudged brown.

Distribution

Admiralty Gulf on north-west coast of Kimberley, Western Australia (Fig. 4).

Python spilotus imbricatus subsp. nov.

Fig. 7

Holotype

R54340 in Western Australian Museum; collected at Jurien Bay, Western Australia in 30°18'S, 115°02'E by Mrs N. Lang on 22 February 1976.

Paratypes

See Material Examined.

Diagnosis

Distinguished from *P. spilotus variegatus* by having strongly imbricate, lanceolate (not rhomboidal) posterior dorsals, fewer ventrals (239-276 v. 259-294) and fewer subcaudals (63-82 v. 75-89).

Description

Tail 14.2-19.4% of SVL (N 4, mean 16.9%). Head 1.2-1.8 times as long as wide (N 29, mean 1.6).

Rostral with an angular apex and a pair of oblique sensory pits; as wide as or slightly wider than high. Prefrontals (1 or 2 pairs) and supraoculars discernible, other head shields fragmented into small irregular scales. Upper labials 11 (5% of specimens), 12 (32% of specimens), 13 (40% of specimens), 14 (21% of specimens) or 15 (2% of specimens) (N 72, mean 12.8). An oblique crease on first to fourth (usually first 3), sixth and seventh entering orbit (41.0% of specimens), sixth to eighth (31% of specimens), seventh to eighth (15% of specimens) and seventh to ninth (13% of specimens). Lower labials 16 (7% of specimens), 17 (37% of specimens), 18 (22% of specimens), 19 (28% of specimens) or 20 (6% of specimens) (N 68, mean 17.8). Six to eight (mostly 7) pits on labials 8-16 commencing on labials 8 or 9 in 73.8% of specimens.

Ventrals 239-276 (N 39, mean 260.6). Anal scale entire. Subcaudals 63-82 (N 39, mean 75.3), mostly divided. Ventrals plus subcaudals 312-351 (N 37, mean 336.3). Dorsals smooth, strongly imbricate and lanceolate posteriorly, in 41-49 rows (N 36, mean 44.8) at midbody; at neck 35-40



Fig. 7: A *Python spilotus imbricatus* from Serpentine.

(N 30, mean 36.8, decreasing by 5-18) and at tail 22-30 (N 34, mean 26.3, decreasing by 14-23).

Colour pattern extremely variable. Ground colour of back brownish with numerous irregular pale fawn blotches or transverse bars edged with 1 or 2 rows of black scales. Scales within ocelli paler than ground colour and immaculate. Scales outside ocelli with varying amounts of black on tips of scales. Ocelli on flanks longitudinally elongate and often coalescing to form irregular black-edged ventrolateral stripes.

When the black on tips of scales on back encroaches to cover all scales outside ocelli (often the case anteriorly) pattern is two-toned (ground colour black with pale fawn blotches). Belly usually with 3 strong black longitudinal stripes, especially on posterior two-thirds; otherwise belly yellowish.

Live specimens give the overall impression of being greenish-black.

Distribution

The south-west of Western Australia, north to Geraldton and Yalgoo, and east to Kalgoorlie, Norseman and Mt Le Grand; also West Wallabi, Garden, North Twin Peak and Mondrain Islands (Fig. 4).

Remarks

Ms A. Edwards of the South Australian Museum (*in litt.*, 4 September 1979) informs me that the South Australian Museum has specimen '*P. spilotos variegatus*' from as far west as Denial Bay, Eyre Peninsula. If an early dubious record of *P. spilotos* is ignored (it was part of a small collection which contained two other species not known from Eucla) the western population is separated from the South Australian population by about 1000 km.

As with *A. ramsayi* a number of *P. spilotos imbricatus* were discarded by the Museum. Their numbers are listed below in square brackets.

An analysis of *P. spilotos imbricatus* accessions suggests a decline in the numbers of this subspecies (at least on the mainland) similar to *Aspidites ramsayi* in south-western Western Australia.

Material Examined

Paratypes

South-West Division: West Wallabi I. (18558, 18583-85); Geraldton [6297]; Dongara [12029]; 10 km E of Badgingarra (27968); Moora [8090]; Walebing [768]; Mogumber [12032]; Ledge Point (31040, 49889); Calcarra [8030]; Bindoon Hill (14939); Merredin [51537]; Yanchepe (19912); North Baandee [586]; Cunderdin (5765), [375, 7605, 11309]; Clackline [6369, 7639]; Bakers Hill [8401]; Gidgiegannup (22993); Woorooloo [10440]; Chidlows [671]; 13 km E of York (21844); 20 km W of York (3815); Yoting [700]; Balkuling [5127, 5131]; Hemsley [10071]; Middle Swan [5199]; Midland [10914]; Maida Vale [6169]; North Beach [585]; Perth [448, 695, 1105]; Perth District [619], (29822); Wembley [5938]; Cottesloe [10099]; Mt Hawthorn (615); Darlington [6712]; Kelmscott [1505]; Armadale [7227]; Roleystone [6253]; Lesmurdie (5316); Mundaring [6129]; Kalamunda [8918]; Gooseberry Hill (5738); Quairading [605], (5978); Dulbelling [517, 5092]; Narembreen (5647); Beverley [4570]; Garden I. (29394, 44716, 58926-27); Mundijong [11812]; 5 km E of Bending (42615); Hyden District (34027); Karlgarin (10185), [10884]; Kondinin (46172); 32 km W of Pingelly (34953); Fairbridge N of Pinjarra (5931); Marrinup [10632]; 13 km E of Crossman (70724); Cuballing [6310]; Contine (70723); Hamel [6331]; Buniche [4544]; Williams [1323]; Kukerin [10138]; Boyup Brook (31979); Bridgetown [8495]; Cowaramup Bay (41920); Monigup Pass (824); 13 km SW of Witchcliffe (24850); Cranbrook (788); Two Peoples Bay (36348).

Eastern Division: Yellowdine (6550); Kalgoorlie district (29162); 20 km E of Kalgoorlie (25102); 10 km E of Karalee [10992]; Spargoville [5859].

North-West Division: Yalgoo [4312].

Eucla Division: 104 km E of Norseman (R45775); Mt Le Grand (47671); North Twin Peak I. (54341); Mondrain I. (68278-79).

Python spilotos variegatus (Gray, 1842)

Morelia variegata Gray, 1842. Zool misc. 43. Type locality: Port Essington [Northern Territory].

Diagnosis

Distinguished from *P. spilotos imbricatus* by having less imbricate posterior dorsals which are rhomboidal (not lanceolate) and more ventrals and sub-caudals 259-294 (N 14, mean 280) v. 239-276 and 75-89 (N 14, mean 84.1)

v. 63-82 respectively. Sum of ventrals plus subcaudals 336-385 (N 14, mean 364) v. 312-351. See Remarks.

Description

Largest specimen 1431 mm in total length. Tail 17.1% of SVL. Head 1.5-1.7 times as long as wide (N 4, mean 1.6).

Rostral with an angular apex and a pair of oblique sensory pits; as wide as or slightly wider than high. Internasals, prefrontals (1 or 2 pairs) and supraoculars discernible, other head shields fragmented into small irregular scales. Upper labials 12 (37% of specimens) or 13 (N 8, mean 12.6), an oblique crease on first to third, sixth to eighth (50% of specimens), fifth to seventh (25% of specimens) and sixth to seventh entering orbit.

Ventrals 280-290 (N 4, mean 285.2). Anal scale entire. Subcaudals 81-89 (N 4, mean 83.2), mostly divided. Ventrals plus subcaudals 362-379 (N 4, 368.5). Dorsals smooth, weakly imbricate becoming almost juxtaposed, rhomboidal posteriorly, in 45-47 rows (N 4, mean 45.7) at midbody; at neck 34-40 (N 4, mean 37.2, decreasing by 6-10) and at tail 26-28 (N 4, mean 26.7, decreasing by 18-20).

Colour pattern not as complex and variable as *P. spilotus imbricatus*. All but one of the specimens has the ground colour of back tan on reddish-brown with fairly regular pale fawn or whitish black-edged bands 3-4 scales wide (as in photograph in Gow 1977b: 12) with little or no tendency to form longitudinal blotches on lower flanks. Ventrals whitish without black marks.

Pale bands on 32364 have broken to form 3 lines of ocelli: a vertebral and 1 on either flank; the vertebral ocelli tending to coalesce.

Distribution

In Western Australia only in the northern Kimberley.

Remarks

The ranges given in the diagnosis for ventrals, subcaudals and their sums include data from Boulenger (1896: 83) and Mitchell (1964: 310). New Guinea specimens are excluded because of their lower counts (see McDowell 1975: 65). The description is based on the four Western Australian specimens.

All Western Australian specimens show a high degree of compression. Only one of several *P. spilotus imbricatus* of similar size showed the same tendency. It is possible that compression is characteristic of juveniles (as in *Aspidites*). On the other hand it is possible that *P. spilotus variegatus* is smaller and more compressed than *P. spilotus imbricatus*.

Material Examined

Kimberley Division: Mitchell Plateau (61730); Prince Regent River Reserve in 15° 28'S, 125° 29'E and 15° 17'S, 125° 04'E (46694, 47038); Wyndham (32364); Pago [1569].

Queensland: Moggill (47673).

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